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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

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SUGGESTIVE.

In the numbers of the RELIGIOUS HISTORIAN, before the public, our main purpose has been to furnish a concise scriptural statement, in reference to

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

So far, in our examinations of truth, we have not had the slightest occasion, to appropriate material, not contained in the Divine volume; and from our present view, there are rich fields of information still unexplored, in the revelations of Christ and the Apostles. We have earnestly labored to direct attention to "A kingdom, not of this world,"—a spiritual edifice—"a building of God, not made with hands," and which "came not by observation." We have, certainly, most clearly shown from the Sacred Scriptures, that Jesus Christ was crowned King, and High priest, when he ascended to heaven, and the sceptre was placed in his hands, at the right hand of the Father. "If he were on earth, he could not be priest."

If we have been fortunate in our examinations of truth, we have

presented undoubted testimony that, the church which was to be "Built on the Rock," and against which "the gates of hell, were not to prevail," was established and made visible on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. The achievements of this memorable day, are styled in the sacred records, "The beginning," the dawning of a new age, which for more than eighteen hundred years, has been called by the enlightened of earth, "The Christian dispensation."

While we consider that these points have been set forth in a sufficiently perspicuous manner, to satisfy most inquirers after truth, there are many other questions of great moment, still demanding careful examination. All matters of a controversial character, which have originated, since the days of Inspiration, must nccessarily be settled by the teaching of the Good Spirit, in the Bible. In reference, for instance, to the main work in which we have been engaged, an able writer has said, "The history of primitive Christianity, is the only solid foundation and starting point of church history." If this position is sound, unity should not be anticipated but by a return to the original platform, revealed in the scriptures, and until professed Christians, as the Savior prayed, "Believe through the words of the Apostles."

Modern church historians, have not generally, seemed to appreciate the power of truth, to unite the faithful of earth, and yet, we may mention, as an exception, Eusebius, universally reported the first Ecclesiastical historian after Luke, who, in his manly efforts to reconcile the fierce beligerents, in settling the articles in the first religious creed by human hands, said, "Taking the terms in the most comprehensive sense, church history, is matter of express revelation. It is the history of man and Divine Providence, in their most momentous aspects, and has, therefore, been selected from the common trains of history, to form the subject of an inspired chronicle; thenceforth, Ecclesiastical history flows from a different origin."

In his great opposition to the new *titles* to the Savior, in the presence of three hundred and eighteen bishops, at the Councel of Nice, in the year 325, he said that, "We should search into no truths, we do not find recorded in the Scriptures. For had the knowledge of others been incumbent on us, the Holy Spirit would doubtless have placed them there. Speak what is written," he added, "and strife will cease." That most wonderful assem-

blage of apostates from the truth of the Gospel, heeded not the warnings of the good man, but blindly plunged themselves and the world, into a strife which can only terminate by the restoration of the plain Spiritual records, still contained in the precious Oracles of our God.

Hence, all that may be written upon the subject of church history, collected from worldly annals, must fail to contribute in the slightest degree, to restore spiritual peace, or lead the earnest of earth, back to God and the paths marked out by his Son.

No historical authority can serve any valuable purpose, till the Sacred records, in all their fulness and highest spiritual import, can be restored to their place, in the adjustment of grave moral questions. *Opinions* of men, upon sacred themes, are but idle dreams; and decrees of councils, are but the impious utterances of a world alienated from God and his ways.

Consequently, our labor, for some time to come, must necessarily be devoted to still deeper researches in Sacred History.

Should our readers, however, at any time consider our movements tardy, we would remind them that, our very limited means of publication—a few pages each month—and our serious difficulties, in endeavoring to correct erroneous views in regard to the church and church history, must continue, for a time, at least, to interfere with our progress. Still, we feel very well assured that, in future, we shall be able to give our researches, a much more systematic direction than hitherto. In school language, our elementary investigations have been more *subjective* than otherwise, but we trust that, we shall soon be prepared to present the main subject with *objective* force and effect.

Should we be successful in our church delineations of the first century, from the sacred scriptures, such a flood of light, will be thrown upon our pathway, that we can scarcely fail to pass the subsequent ages on solid ground. Indeed, none other but Sacred light, can avail in defining the church, and elucidating her heaven-born principles. When we shall see the bride of Christ, as she was and *is*, we can but require perfect conformity, of all other descriptions and records, to the Divine model. A clear scriptural statement, in reference to a single church of the saints, will afford a perfect measure of historical authority, for every other church, for any and every age.

It will be remembered that, in attempts of the Romish hierarchy to establish her claims to universality, the appeal, for the past fif-

teen hundred years, has been, to the soundness of her creed, to the infallibility of her doctrines. Hence, most uncompromisingly has she struggled to satisfy the world, that what she styles her "faith," is the true faith of all the saints, on earth, and in heaven. Even "The Evangelical Alliance," in calling the Protestant world to oppose Rome, submitted a declaration of faith, or rather, an incoherent and unscriptural collection of items on subjects divine, as conditions of fellowship. Modern churches, generally preach that each, is the true body of Christ, on the supposition, the creed combines the one only living and true faith of promise. In this manner, the parties which find not the slightest vestige of authority for their existence in the word of God, vainly boast, that their "six hundred and sixty-six" outlandish names and systems—"the names of the beast—are of divine origin and authority. Should any party, however, be able to prove her creed in accordance with the teaching of the Sacred volume, we would most cheerfully say, that is the true church, "the One body" of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps, no one, save the Romish mother, professes to be the only church. Still, Protestant, and other churches, claim to be "*branches*" of the true church." No sect, section, or heresy, o either ancient or modern origin, can rightfully lay claim to participation in the true body of our Lord.

We deem it proper and very important, in this connection, to say, we know of a truth, that there are many, and not a few on the American Continent, and in the United States, who claim not the slightest connection with any denomination, party or sect, of either ancient or modern origin, whether Greek, Jewish, Romish, Protestant or otherwise.

While we award sincerity and devotion to all parties, and feel assured God has a people in Babylon, we maintain that we must look beyond denominations for the true church. God has a family, and has had, from the day of Pentecost, whose members, he kindly acknowledges as his spiritual sons and daughters. These are the true people of the Lord, "The saved and sanctified," who constitute the church of the First born, whose names are written in heaven.

Are we asked for evidence that such a family really exists? We answer that, it is our firm belief Christ planted his church at Jerusalem, on the day specified; and from that day to the present, she has been the subject of historical certainty.

If it can be shown, that any people, since the days of the In-

spired Apostles have held, "The faith" of inspiration, there could be no doubt as to the truth of the conclusion, that they constitute the church of God. If it should be shown, however, that there are no people, who walk happily, in "The one faith," the evidence would be conclusive, there is now no true church of the Lord; our beloved Savior was not the promised Messiah, and his religion is not from above. If the Lord Jesus Christ, arose not from the dead, "our hope is vain," says Paul, "and we are yet in our sins." If we are not members of the spiritual family, as represented in the New testament, we should entertain no hope of immortality and eternal life beyond the dark river of death.

We, therefore, in the further prosecution of our Historical researches, very humbly invite the attention of our associates and friends of the world, to the examination of

1st. THE FAITH, "ONCE FOR ALL, DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS." —*Jude* 3.

2nd. THE ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT AND UNITY, OF THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST.

3rd. THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL, IN THE NAME OF CHRIST, THROUGH THE CHURCH.

4th. THE IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE, "BROUGHT TO LIGHT', BY THE PRINCE OF PEACE, AS THE FUTURE REWARD OF THE SAINTS.

Conscious of our defects, we can but question our qualifications, to embody the truths of the Bible, with reference to these great subjects, in a manner, which will convey to the hearts of our readers, the whole light of the spirit. Should we, however, be so fortunate, as to bring to bear upon the questions involved, the principles which alone can illumine "The narrow way, which leads to life," we can apprehend but little or no trouble in the adjustment of the seeming conflicts of church history subsequent to the Apostles of Christ. Denominational strifes, contribute not in the least, to throw light on the history of the Christian institution. It is still in the memory of many thoughtful men, in America, that some years since, a distinguished Romanist engaged to prove "The Presbyterian church, is not the church of Christ," and in turn, a gentleman of quite equal ability and position, in the Presbyterian church, published a book to prove "the Romish hierarchy is not authorized by the Scriptures." We presume, no one of right mind, has to this day, doubted the truth

of each gentleman's conclusions; and yet nothing was accomplished by either, of a satisfactory character, to show, at least, the origin, organization, or history of the church of God. The friends of denominationalism may, possibly, be able to point out excellencies, in each sect, but there is no bond of scriptural union claimed in parties not recognized in the word of God. All are recent, when compared with the one only true church, and no one, to this date, has even professed to adopt the New testament as a platform. It is true, all profess to take the Bible, in the sense, that each denomination, draws its articles from the same fountain of truth; but when we see their contradictions and conflicts arising therefrom, we can but conclude the great error consists in an utter failure to walk by "The forms of sound words," in the Precious Oracles.

Under our first heading—"*The one faith*"—we will commence our labor for 1874, by calling special attention to

"THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST."—*Heb.* 6: 1.

No one doubts that, strong prejudice prevails very generally against, "Doctrinal preaching," "Doctrinal writings," and even against "Doctrinal conversations," in reference to rellgion. What can be the cause of so inveterate dislike to the word "Doctrine?" Possibly, it arises from the very general opinion which exists that, there is little or no truth in doctrine; and really nothing valuable, arising from any form of teaching whatever. From this view, one doctrine is considercd quite as good as another, and men can be saved as certainly in one way, just as well as in another. If the person is only sincere, it matters not what he professes to believe, whether the Gospel of Christ, or the revelations of Mohammed, no doctrine, it is presumed, possesses saving power. Considering well the unsettled condition of the masses of our contemporaries touching the proper form of belief, we should at least consent to examine carefully the bearings and worth of

"THE DOCRTINE OF THE LORD."

Our best scholars agree in two modes of teaching. In the first place, errors should be corrected; and secondly, every honest heart is entitled to a large administration of the truth, as it was written by the Good Spirit. It behooves us to define

THE WORD "DOCTRINE," AS CONTAINED IN THE BIBLE.

We do not remember to have noticed in any denominational connection, the word used in the singular number. We hear, on the contrary, the phrases, "Doctrines of the Bible," "Doctrines of the Old testament and of the New," Doctrines of God, "Doctrines of Christ and of God," "The doctrines of the church," of "Grace," and of "salvation."

If it should be maintained that, these expressions, in thought, are not incorrect, we would respectfully reply that, they are not the language of the Holy Spirit. The soundest thinkers of the world agree that, for every Bible thought, there is evidently, a sacred form; and if any entertain views which are not clothed in spiritual forms, they cannot be of God. So thought Eusebeus, as we have noticed, and we can call to mind no profound Biblical scholar, who would likely differ from him. The sacred forms, in which the Good Spirit has seen proper to reveal the mind of the Father, it occurs to us, should not only be respected, but solemnly revered, as his voice, to a lost race.

We find in the scriptures, "The doctrines and commandments of men." Mat. 15: 9; Mark 7: 7; Col. 2: 22. We notice also, "The doctrines of devils," 1 Tim. 4: 1. But thus speaks not the Spirit of subjects Divine As we have seen, quite a different style is employed by the Spirit, in reference to matters sacred. While it may seem a small matter to many, we deem it important to call attention to some of the

FORMS OF SOUND DOCTRINE RECORDED.

Faul said, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, consider their rulers worthy of all honor, that the name of God and *his doctrine* be not blasphemed." 1 Tim. 6: 1. Again, he exhorted that "Servants should be so placed under their rulers thatt they may be pleasant in all things, showing all good fidelity, tha, they may adorn the *doctrine* of God our Savior, in all things.', Titus 2: 10, Thus we find, plainly enjoined, in Sacred usage, "The doctrine of God." We have also, such expressions as, "Abiding in the doctrine of Christ." 2 Jno. 9. We have the form "*sound doctrine*." 1 Tim, 1: 10, (2) Tim. 4: 3, Titus 1: 9, and 2: 1. Again, we find the style, "*Good Doctrine*," 1 Tim. 4: 6. Also, "*Apostles doctrine*," "*The doctrine*" and "*Doctrine*," but we discover no example of *doctrines* in sacred usage,

The Apostle said, "Whosoever, transgresseth and abideth not in the *doctrine* of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son." 2 John 9. Hence, we conclude that, one who receives not the doctrine of our Blessed Redeemer, is really without God and without hope in the world." When the angel opened the prison doors, he said, to the incarcerated Apostles, "Go, stand in the temple, and speak unto the people, all the words of this life." From this authority, we are necessarily forced to the conclusion that there is really power in the *forms* of the words of the spirit, to "turn men from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan to God." The angel said to Cornelius, "Call for Simon, whose sir-name is Peter, who shall tell the *words*, whereby thou, and all thy house, shall be saved." Acts, 11: 14.

If we, then, understand the meaning of Inspiration, the ambassadors of Christ, spoke not words of their own, but always "As the Holy Spirit gave them utterance." Ac. 2, 4. Paul, again, quoted the passage, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, But God hath revealed them to us, by his Spirit. Which things we also speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, interpreting spiritual things, by the teaching of the Spirit." 1 Cor. 2: 9—13.

Not only were the words of life, given by the Spirit, but the articles of our faith, are in spiritual *forms*.

We again, call attention to the fact that, the highest blessings, are promised to such as "Believe" on the Savior, "as the Scriptures say." In the prayer of our Lord, in the garden, he said, "Neither pray I for these alone"—his disciples, who had been with him—"but also, for all them who shall believe on me, *through their word*"—through the divine words uttered by the Apostles—"That they may all be one, in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Jno. 17: 20, 21.

When men believe through the words of the spirit, we can discover no possible ground, on which they can differ. Indeed, we cannot bring ourself to the terrible conclusion, that there is the slightest difference in the faith of such as believe through the forms of inspiration. In reference to these, Paul wrote, "But God be thanked that, though you were the servants of sin, you have obeyed from the heart, *that form of doctrine* (*type of teaching*)

which was delivered to you. Being then, made free from sin, you become the servants of righteousness." Ro. 6: 17, 18. Here we discover "*a form of obedience*" revealed.

With these things before us, we can see great propriety in the obligation to tenaciously adhere to

"THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."

Paul, when about to depart from earth, solemnly exhorted his beloved son in the Gospel, then at Ephesus, to "*Hold fast the form of sound words*, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. 1: 13. We can discover no ground to doubt the conclusion, that the "Form of sound words," is in every department of labor as especially revealed, as any other obligation in the Bible. We have heard a thousand times, not only from the ignorant, but from men in the highest walks of speculative religion that, "As to the *how*, any obligation is performed, it does not matter, so the substance is preserved." Thus, it was, as the Prophet foretold, men thought to "change times and laws,"—to convert the "one immersion" into a sprinkling, non-essential ceremony; and the Lord's supper, into a partisan "*sacrament.*"

The first form to the Apostles is, "Go teach," and the second is, "Baptize, the believers into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The slightest interference with these sacred forms, destroys their force and effect.

The current practice, of placing "repentance before belief," "baptism before teaching," prayer, "before taking the yoke of Christ," "remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit," in the open fields of rebellion, and before entering the spiritual edifice, is quite subversive of all "forms of sound words," of "good doctrine," and of the intelligent obedience, of such as really honor Christ. From these premises, two conclusions seem indisputable,

1. *The words of the Spirit are in divine form in the New Testament; and when not in form they are not the words of God, "but changed into a lie."* Ro. 1, 25.

2. *The doctrine of Christ, is also, in Inspired form, as relates to all belief and all practice.*

Next, we deem it necessary to notice,

THE MEANING OF THE WORD DOCTRINE.

1. The Greek verb, *διδασκω*, means, "*I teach.*" It occrus 98 times in the New Testament, and is rendered *teach* in every instance.

2. The noun, *διδάσκαλος*, occurs fifty-two times, and is rendered 41 times, *Master*, 16 times *teacher*, and, *doctors*, once. In most places where, *master* occurs, it is applied to the Savior. *Teacher* is the only correct rendering in any occurrence of the word. There is something exceedingly jarring, in calling the Messiah, *master*, but *teacher* in every instance, would be expressive of the true character of our Lord, and very becoming.

The noun, *διδασκαλία*, is used twenty-one times, and is rendered 11 times *doctrine*, twice, *teaching*, and once, *learning*. *Teaching*, is the Scriptural thought.

The noun, *διδαχή*, is translated 29 times, *doctrine*, and once, "*hath been taught.*" Ti. 1, 9. This last, Is a rude attempt at translation. *Teachtng* is the idea of the Spirit. Without doubt, the verb should have been translated in every instance, to *teaeh;* the first noun, *Teacher*, and never, *master*, and the last two should have been rendered *teaching*, and never, *doctrine*. Instead, therefore, of the word *doctrine*, as employed in our translations, *teaching*, expresses the full meaning of the Spirit in a much more striking manner, and should be preferred. The style,—"Teaching of God," "Teaching of Christ," "sound teaching," 'Good teaching," and, "Teaching of the Apostles," should offend not the most fastidious. It is plain, simple, expressive, and a word which can be reverentially employed, by all, who love a pure speech. It expresses the mind of the Spirit, while no other word approaches it. It also, removes the mystic veil on the face of doctrine. There is something technieal and partisan, in doctrine, but there is nothing objectionable in that of teaching. Feeling so fully assured that, no scholar, or person who thinks correctly on the subject, can raise even a plausible objection to our rendering, we consider it proper, to mainly employ the word *teaching*, in our subsequent examinations of the matters involved. In the practical bearings of the subject, we invite very special attention,

TO THE UNITY OF THE TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The Apostle Paul, earnestly exhorted his brethren, to "endeavor

the keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. 4, 3. This oneness sf Spirit, he explains, by specifying the exact articles, revealed.

1. "There is one body,"—one church, one family, one household, one temple, one way.

2. "One Spirit,"—one teacher, one comforter, to animate the one body, and to fill each christian heart, with joy.

3. "One Hope,"—As all were called to look to the same great reward in heaven,

4. "One Lord,"—one law giver, leader, ruler and judge.

3. "One Faith,"—As the teaching is one, the faith springing from it, must necessarily be one. This article, we may elaborate, on a more favorable occasion.

6. "One Baptism,"—The one immersion, for all believers, in order to "Put on Christ."

7. "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all."

Beyond these seven articles, the Spirit of Wisdom, presumed not to communicate. We have frequently noticed what, some call, "*The Apostle's Creed*," not, in the concise and perspicuous style of the articles by Paul, and not as old as the Divine *formula* by several hundred years. Of course, such a creed is not sanctioned in the Scriptures. There are at least, two fatal errers prevailing in regard to creeds, articles of belief, or the supposed true doctrines. In the Romish, Greek and most of the Protestant churches, it is held that, but few of the members, are authorized by the Great Head of the church, to interpret, expound, explain, unfold and shape the Scriptures of truth; in a manner that enables them to form creeds for their brethren, In this view, creeds are formed by presumed interpretations and not by Divine forms, Others, of what is called a "free way of thinking," suppose it is the right of all persons to expound the will of God, and form creeds to their own liking. These, in advance, we have called fatal blunderers, and it is proper, to make good our conclusions.

It is, perhaps, the most dangerous delusion of any age, to consider the Bible, a book of mysteries, requiring, profound learning, a special call, and direct light from above, to interpret it. What is unrevealed, is certainly a mystery; but what is made known, is no longer a secret. When there is a revelation of any matter made, that which was covered becomes uncovered, what was un-

known becomes known, and darkness is converted into light. The Holy Scriptures, purport to be revelations, of matters, things and subjects, of which the world would have remained profoundly ignorant, without them. What we can discover from reason—from the outward, or inward world—by our natural powers—we need not a revalation to make known. The subjects, which we denominate Spiritual—"God," "The Father," "The Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ,"—"The Holy Spirit,"—"The Church,"—"The Obedience of Faith," and the "Immortality and Eternal Life,' beyond the grave—we could not have known but through direct revelations, We might with great propriety urge a thousond and one objections to the theories of interpreters for the Scriptures, but a few must suffice for the present.

If the Bible is a revelation, it needs not to be explained. It is preposterous to think of interpreting as we hcve said, an iuterpretation. With this fancy, each interpretation would require an interpreter, and ths process would continue without end. The Scriptures of truth, were not committed to the learned, to a few called to explain them, or to "Officials," but they were given as the mind of God to his children to read, understand and believe as written by the Spirit, in the forms divinely furnished. No book, or letter of the New Testament, was entrusted to a deep thinker, or one of great power to interpret dark sayings, but to the "brethren," "the common people," the plain men and women, who were presumed capable of comprehending the simple words of their own language, and of obeying from the heart, the things spoken. The attempts to interpret the interpretations of God, from the first Ecumenical Counsel at Nice, in Bithynia, under "Constantine the Great." in 325, to this day, have only tended to darken counsel by words without meaning. Where can there be found at this day, a creed from these pretended interpretations of Holy Scripture, which can be understood by the framsrs, or others? We think that, we are not influenced from prejudice, when we say, we have not found a single system, of interpretations, without contradictions and confusion in every part. In the very last, and certainly, the most authoritative, "Declaration of Faith," adopted by the "Evangelical Alliance," we discover no feature which bears a very striking likeness, of the sacred forms of the Bible.

"The articles of Constitution," adopted at London in 1846, and "cofirmed" by every meeting to the one recently held in New

York, reads; "The divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures; the unity of the God-head, and the trinity of three persons therein, the utter depravity of human nature, in consequence of the fall; the incarnation of the Son of Cod, his atonement and mediatorial intercession and reign; the justification of the sinner by faith alone, the work of the Holy Spirit, in conversion and santification; the divine institution of the christian ministry, the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body; the judgment of the world by Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked."

Suppose we agree that, this is the best statement of Orthodoxy in existence, it is not in scriptural language—the forms at least, lack the Divine sanction—all therefore, require explanation, and can never form a bond of union amongst christians. Various items are of doubtful import, possibly, some are absolutely false, and not a single one is couched in the pure language of the Holy Spirit. It will not even compare with the Divine form of articles, uttered by the men who spoke by the Spirit. The articles of the Bible require no expositor, while each particular one of the recent creed; demands explanations, which no member of the so called "Alliance" could possibly give. Hence, we cannot hope for "Spiritual unity," in this direction. Our conclusion is that, belief in and through the words and Divine forms of the Spirit's teaching, can alone produce, unity in belief, unity in church, in obedience, in heart and in life, among the disciples of Christ. The teaching of the Spirit, is *one* teaching—one doetrine, and the effect of adopting it, would afford a good exhibition of one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism, one Spirit, one name of Christ, of one people and universal unity in all the parts of the temple of God.

Were the Teaching---or Doctrine of God, properly adjusted in the religious world, as before intimated, there could not exist any serious embarrassment as to the one and only true church and her full history, in the ages of the past, as well as the future. But any attempt at a satisfactory history of the body of Christ, conglomerated with the factions of the past, present, or future, must continue to prove abortive. In order, therefore, to contribute our mite in preparing the way, for a correct Historical statement of the Temple of God, we will proceed in the examination of a few of

the most important departments of the *Teaching*, of Divine Wisdom. We introduce the subject by inviting attention to

THE TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES IN REFERENCE TO GOD.

Solomon said, "The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom," and a greater than Solomon said, "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17, 111. Possibly our greatest statesman, Daniel Webster, was happy in the conclusion that, the full realization of an Allwise and ever present Father in Heaven, is the grandest conception of a mortal of earth. Vain is it, to talk of religion,or to engage in the intricases of systems, if deprived of the heaven inspiring knowledge of our Great Creator, the Being in whom we all live, move and have our existence.

We gravely ask the question, why the God of Speculatists, inspires no deep reverence in the heart? The flippancy of modern Spiritualists, and other infidels, in regard to their, "god of nature," as they call him, is disgusting beyond measure. The god of heathens is a mercenary monster, who delights in shedding blood, in carnage, and in fleshly indulgencies. In the descriptions of all the gods of imagination, there is little, or nothing to beget love in the heart, or to encourage an upright life. As the people think, whether true or false, their lives will be inclined. We must add that, the gods of the creeds, fall very far short of coming up to the full measure of the Omnipotent Jehovah, who sits in the heavens and rules in the affairs of men on earth. Hence, we conclude that, all efforts to describe a god unknown,—unrevealed —must utterly fail, to impress mankind with a conception which will lead to righteousness, to peace, love and unity. It will be well for us, in forming our conclnsions, in reference to our Heavenly Father, to listen to a few utterances of the Volume of Inspiration. People who are unenlightened, spiritually, are without God and without hope, according to the New Testament teaching. While to the enlightened, the world exhibits marks of design, or as David says, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night, showeth knowlcdge." Ps. 19: 1, 2. But without the light of the Good Spirit shining upon the works of nature, all is mid-night darkness, even to the wisest of earth

Hence, where revelation has not performed its mission, the people stumble and fall. They have no God, and are without hope. Superstition, evinces confusion of thought and perverted views, with regard to the true God. Not presuming it is in man to know his origin, by philosophy, or that he can by the external world, acquire the necessary information in reference to our Creator, we can but appeal to,

THE BIBLE FOR ALL TRUE SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

When we open this sacred volume, the first verse reads, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." In the Hebrew, the name is *Eloheym*, in the plural, or, as the learned agree, it is The *pluralis majestaticus*, or the plural expressive of Divine excellence, and has no reference to a plurality of persons. In the passage, God is simply represented, as the Creator of the universe. In the fuller developments of the Divine mind, we learn that God our Father, created all things by His only begotten and well beloved Son.

We venture the employment of no word of doubtful meaning, in our conclusions in regard to our Creator, but will endeavor to adhere most strictly, to the words of the Spirit. When Moses in the desert, was directed to deliver the children of Israel from bondage, he was instructed to say, "I AM, hath sent me." He was further taught to say, "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," the "I AM THAT I AM, is the only true God." Ex. 3, 14. This is the clearest declaration in the Scriptures of "*Absolute existence*," or of the existence of one Almighty Father, who is sublimely independent of all created intelligencies. It is quite enough for us to know that, as our God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, he is superior to and independent of, what we term, physical nature.

Again, God said to Moses, "I appeared to the fathers, by my name, God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH, was I not known to them." Ex, 6: 3.

The Hebrews regarded Jehovah, as the most sacred style of the Divine Majesty, and for several centuries before Christ, they considered it, as too sacred to be uttered. This was evidently, the result of superstitious views.

From the establishment of the law, 1490 years before Christ, God spake to his people, "From the mercy-seat, that was upon

the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims." Nu. 7: 89. It was there, his name was recorded, and all prayers were offered by Israelites looking steadily towards the temple. Hence, Daniel at Babylon, opened his windows towards Jerusalem, and bowed in humble prayer three times in the day, and God heard him and preserved him, even in the lion's den.

In the New testament statement, Christ is presented as the true Representative of his Father, who came to earth to make him known to a lost world. Hence the Savior said to Philip, "When you see me you see the Father." Jesus Christ, under the Christian dispensation, is our only *"mercy-seat,"* and no one has the right to approach the Father, but through him. Hence, all ideas of men praying to God, except in the name of his Son, or through Christ, as the Mediator, are incorrect and injurious. We have no theory, either "trinitarian" or "unitarian," to defend, or explain, in reference to the Divine Father, but we humbly adopt the words of the Holy book, as constituting the boundary of truth, regarding the Father of all intelligencies. This, to us, seems to be the extent of all correct knowledge of our Father, the Great Jehovah.

It may be proper to add that, the Almighty, is represented, not only as the Creator of all things, but as the Preserver of the heavens and the earth. He is ever present, and a kind and loving Father. "God so loved the world that, he gave his Only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Such is the teaching of "Holy Writ," concerning God our adorable Father, who cares for his sons and daughters of earth. He who believes in God, through the Divine forms, believes to the saving of the soul, and all others, as previously intimated are without God, and really, without the hope of the Gospel.

Before dismissing the subject of the Divine Majesty, we may profitably notice

THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT IN REFERENCE TO THE SON OF GOD.

The Bible represents our Lord, as "With the Father, before the world was; as the Divine Word, by whom God created all things." As "Rich in heaven," and for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich."

While on earth, he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath no place to lay his head." On another occasion he said, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." While he peregrinated on earth, he reproved sin amongst the high and the low, and for his faithfulness in his mission, he was hated by the people, and finally put to death in the most ignominious manner. On the third day, it is written that, he rose a triumphant conqueror over death, hell and the grave, "He brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel," and finally, ascended to heaven, where he was crowned King, and constituted the High Priest of our salvation. The promise was that, "That same Jesus who ascended to heaven, shall in like manner descend to the earth, and finally jndge the world in righteousness.

Such, are a few of the representations of our Blessed Savior, contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and upon these, and these alone, hang all our hopes of immortality and eternal life.

We believe with all our heart, that these things are from above, that they contain the truth regarding our Lord, and that, all who will be saved, must believe through the teaching of the Divine spirit, as written in the "Book of Books," the "Book of life"—the Sacred fountain of all true spiritual intelligence, and the only ground of hope for the bewildered sons and daughters of earth.

These sacred items, we respectfully submit, as indispensable conditions, to become wise unto salvation, and to gain an abundant entrance into that state, where the weary will rest in eternal security, freed from the ills of a world in a state of death.

TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES IN REGARD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Owing to the fact that, The Spirit of God has usually been treated as a subject involving very great mystery, we should be very careful not to transcend the plain teaching of the Bible in our conclusions. While it may be impossible to define "*spirit*" in mathematical terms, it is, nevertheless, a subject of revelation, and we are allowed to employ such language, in our delineations,

as have been furnished by a Wise Father. It is indeed, said, "God is spirit," and if from the poverty of language, or the exceeding weakness of human conception, we are unable to define the word to our own satisfaction, or to the satisfaction of others, it is but respectful to Divine wisdom to conclude, there are many grand themes, much better suited for our contemplations in the future state, than in this life. All that we can think, or know of God or of his "Beloved Son," our Lord Jesus Christ, in these low grounds of sorrow, we have attempted to show, we have learned from revelation; and all we can hope to know, or teach in regard to the Good spirit, is derived solely from the same Divine volume.

When, therefore, we open the scriptures, the first quite overwhelming statement we find, after the solemn declaration that, "First of all, God, created the heavens and the earth, and darkness was upon the face of the deep," is that "The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, let there be light, and there was light." Gen. 1: 1—3.

Thus, we discover that, the spirit was the Great Creator's agent, in dispelling the thick darkness that brooded over the new-born earth, and revealing the light of the world.

In the statement of Moses, we also discover that, the Spirit was the agent of Omnipotence, in "Dividing the light from the darkness," and in defining day and night. It seems to us proper, in this first notice of the

"WORK OF THE SPIRIT,"

to insist that, in all subsequent ages, the same Divine power, has been employed by the Father, to drive back the deep darkness that has hung over our earth-born race, and to supply a sure light to shine upon the straight and narrow passage, in which the faithful walk to the mansions of bliss. No imagination therefore, is necessary to impress the great truth upon our heart that, from Adam to Christ, the Father spoke to the world, as Paul tells us, (Heb. 1, 1,) by the "Spirit in the Prophets." Ne. 19: 30.

When we open the New testament, the first mention of the Spirit, is by the angel Gabriel, to the priest Zacarias, when he promised that his wife Elizabeth, should bear a son who "Shall be filled with the Holy Spirit," from the womb. Lu. 1: 15. Sec-

ondly, the angel said to the virgin Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest, shall overshadow thee, Therefore. also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Lu. 1: 35.

Next, we hear John, proclaiming to the Jews, "I baptize you in water, in order to repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit, and in fire. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff in unquenchable fire." "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that beareth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." It will be seen by carefully looking over the passages that, the wicked Jews were comparable to unfruitful trees, and the chaff which were to be baptized by fire, or burned up, leaving neither root nor branch. But the believing sons and daughters of Abraham, were considered the pure wheat, suited for storing in the secure grainery, or to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Hence, when the faithful were addressed alone, as the disciples just before the Savior ascended, the promise was, "You shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit." Ac. 1, 5. But not a word was said about fire. The baptism in fire, was equivalent to suffering in a "furnace of fire," threatened, when our Lord said, "The tares are gathered and burned in the fire. So shall it be at the close of this age. The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and those who do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, then shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Mat. 13: 40—42.

While the baptism of the Spirit was to confer inestimable blessings, the baptism of fire, was for the destruction of the wicked. We mention the latter part of the statement, mainly to show, that the very general practice of revivalists, especially in invoking the baptism of fire, betrays ignorance, of the plain truths of the Scriptures. It evinces equal disregard for the pure teaching of God, for any one to pray for the baptism of the Spirit, in order to convert the people to God. While the baptism of the Spirit conferred inestimable blessings on the world, in communicating light through chosen vessels, it never was intended to physically convert, regenerate or pardon sins. The fourth occurance of the

Spirit's manifestation, in New Testament, is with reference to the baptism of our Lord.

It is written, "When Jesus was baptized, he went up straight way out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." In this instance of the descent of the Spirit, the purpose evidently was to show to the perishing of earth, that Jesus was not only the Son of the Blessed, but the chosen Savior of man. It was, to manifest to the people Him, who, though rich in heaven, became poor, that the lost might, through him, be saved. The Spirit's descent on Jesus, was for no purifying, regeneration, or possibly other personal blessing to our Lord, but was mainly, no doubt, to manifest God in the person of his son to man.

A short time before the Savior was crucified, when he saw the hearts of his disciples were filled with sorrow at the thought of his departure from earth, he encouragingly said to them, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." John 14: 13—18. This is the first clear promise of the Spirit by the Savior, to the disciples, and therefore, we will call special attention to it.

The promise was to supply the intimated loss, of the New teacher, to the almost discouraged disciples. The Lord had not only promised a kingdom, which had not come, but had really intimated that he was on the very eve of leaving them. Seeing their disturbed condition, the Redeemer, kindly promised that, he would ask the Father, to send them in his place, a teacher who would remain with them. While the circumstances, may somewhat justify the translation "*comforter*," it by no means expresses the full meaning of the promise, that the teacher whom the Father would send, should remain with them. The Greek *Παραχλητος*, literally, and of course correctly translated, is *Teacher*, or "One to call to the Father, when he should depart." Hence, the Spirit, was to comfort by teaching, leading and protecting from error, the very disconsolate disciples, who had forsaken all for the Master.

The Lord was very specific in announcing that, the "World cannot receive the Spirit." He was sent to the disciples, particularly, to the twelve, for the purpose of blessing the world through them, as ministers of grace.

Again our Savior said to his disciples, "But the Comforter, (Advocate) who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14, 26. He had said in the 18th verse, "I will not leave you comfortless, (*ὀρφανούς*—orphans,) but I will come to you." In other words, I will not leave you without a teacher, an instructor and director. It will be noted that, the Spirit, was to occupy the place, in "Leading them into all the truth," at that time unrevealed, and "Bring to their minds whatsoever he had said unto them."

In reference to his departure, and the coming of another teacher, he said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the advocate will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (*ελεγξει*—convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.

"Of sin, because they believe not on me;

"Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more;

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

"I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come," He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." John 16: 7—15.

In this quotation, we have clearly brought to view, not only the character of the new Teacher, but also, the main work he was to perform. He was to supply the place of Jesus, as Instructor, Leader, was to remind the disciples of all the Lord had said, and to convict the world of sin. Yet, he was to speak not of himself, but whatsoever he heard of the Father, he was to speak to the disciples.

With the mission of the Spirit still in mind, the Lord said to his followers and ambassadors, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them,

and whosesoever sins you retain, they are retained." John 20, 22, 23. The allusion, was with reference to the reception of the spirit, upon his ascension to the Father; for he had said, "If I go not away, the Spirit will not come to you." The Spirit was to so direct the Apostles, as to enable them to prescribe the terms of pardon to a lost world.

After this conversation, the Lord said to the twelve, "It is written that repentance and remission of sins, shall be preached in my name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." "And ye shall be witnesses of these things. I send the promise of my Father upon you." But to show clearly that, the Spirit had not come, he added, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24, 47—49. In another Scripture the same author said, just before the Lord went up, "John truly baptized in water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit, not many days hence." Ac. 1: 5.

On the next "First day of the week," afterwards, called the Lord's-day—or on the next "Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Ac. 2: 1—4.

In Peter's explanation of this most wonderful phenomenon, he said, "This, is that which was spoken by Joel. It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days, of my spirit, and they shall prophesy."

This scripture, details fully both the descent and mission of the Spirit.

When the Apostle directed the believers to 'Repent and each of them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," he told them, they "should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Ac. 2: 38.

It would be well in this connection to refer to the instruction of our Lord, to Nicodemus, that "Except a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." John 3: 5.

In the commission, the Lord directed, to "Baptize the taught, into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

As Peter "Began to speak the words by which the Gentiles were to be saved, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard, and they who came with Peter, were astonished because that on the Gentiles also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit; for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." Acts 10: 44—46.

It should not be regarded as marvelous that, Peter charged Ananias and Sapphira, with the sin of "Tempting the Spirit of the Lord, and of lying to the Holy Spirit." Thus, they lied to God, In this passage, we see clearly that, the Spirit of wisdom not only occupied the place of the Savior, but in lying to the Spirit, they lied to God."

In subsequent developments of the Spirit, we discover that his mission was not only to direct the Apostles, but to guide and direct all the churches "till that which was perfect should come. Till all the light necessary for the guidance of the people of God, and the spiritual illumination of the world, for all time, had been fully revealed,

From the day of Pentecost, the "Spirit was also given as a witness of God to all them that obeyed him." Ac. 5: 32.

The Apostle Paul on the same subject declared that, "Because they were sons, God sent the Holy Spirit into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father," [Gal. 4: 6.] and also that, "After they believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eph. 1: 13, 14.

To Christians, the Apostle said, "If any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of his; and "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God; and finally, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." Ro. 8: 9—16.

As Teacher, the Spirit led and guided the saints miraculously, to the completion of the revelation, which contained "All things which pertain to life and godliness;" and as "the earnest of our inheritance," to strengthen the saints with might in the inner man. Hence, we are fully assured that, the Spirit dwells in the hearts of all the saints.

With these authorities before us, regarding the teaching of the Scriptures concerning the Holy Spirit, the following conclusions seem to us inevitable:

1. The Good Spirit of our Heavenly Father was promised as a Comforter to the sorrowing saints of earth, to teach, guide and lead all who look up to God, through Christ.

2. It is clear that, no other agency was to be employed in perfecting the revelations of the Father to the world.

3. The Spirit did bring to the minds of the disciples, all that the Savior had taught them, and completed and "sealed up the testimony," which has guided our erring race for more than eighteen hundred years.

4. The Spirit is given to all who obey from the heart "That form of doctrine given in the Scriptures, and dwells in the body of Christ, as the light and life of all the members.

5. The Holy Spirit is "The earnest of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

6. The Spirit is a witness to our hearts that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. By the Spirit, that dwells in the saints, they will be made alive, in the resurrection.

More upon the "*Teaching of the Holy Scriptures*," regarding the Good Spirit, of our God, for our present purpose, we deem not necessary.

CHRISTIAN COURTESY.

And the "Charity which thinketh no evil" render the character of Christians very lovely. When, however, these graces are not cultivated—when words of bitterness drop from the lips or pen, how painfully they fall upon the ear, and how the heart longs for a home—a world where such tones are not heard, such words are not spoken.

Bro. M. T. Moye, has an article on this subject in the *Watch-Tower*. In it, he beseeches his brethren, by the "meekness and gentleness of Christ," to cultivate in their writings, a more loving spirit, and to avoid every expression that would stir up a feeling, not in accordance with his religion. How different would be

the state of things, if all would give heed to his words of wisdom, not only in writing, but in every-day conversation.

I was much impressed, some time since, by reading a letter from a person who spent many of his years in talking privately and publicly on religious subjects, and in trying every day to live the Christian. He says, "We have all agreed that, if anyone of us makes a remark to the discredit of another, the rest of the family shall admonish the offender. By this means, we have entirely banished evil speaking from among us. In the morning, we are careful to speak of no subject that is unfavorable to a prayerful frame of mind. This first resolution banishes from the families of religious people all remarks that injure others and of course tend to the unhappiness of those who make them. How safe one would feel at such a fireside, with no fear of unkind things being said as soon as he has left it. If such remarks were banished from the fireside, we would seldom meet them in the columns of religious papers, and such a comfort it would be to miss them there—never to see or hear them repeated.

That all men and women have faults is too true, and God only knows how bitter the pain arising from this source. Few can look back over their lives and say, I remember nothing for which I sorrow now. I can recall no act of my life, I would willingly blot out and remember no more." The greatest and the best have memories of sadness, and this consciousness of frailty shonld make all take heed how they cast the first stone at a brother, if he cannot have the same views with themselve, or is even in the way. If a writer is careful in the morning to speak on of such subjects that do not prevent a prayerful frame of mind, at night, he will not be apt to write an article he knows will irritate or sadden any heart, or fill it with a spirit opposed to the kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering, with which all are exhorted to clothe themselves.

The Christian man I have mentioned, says, "We meet for a little while before candles are brought in, to talk of heaven. If not convenient then, we take a few moments after prayer, and it prepares us for very sweet sleep." What a beatiful scene, parents meeting with their children in the soft twilight, to speak of heaven. Again he says, "Met with Christian friends to talk of our heavenly home. We had a sweet season, so that our hearts burned within us."

Children and friends so employed, would, it seems, almost learn

the courtesy of angels, and would put away all the anger, wrath and malice that bring so much misery to the frail children of earth.

It might well be said of this good man and his family, that their conversation was in heaven. When the conversation of Christians shall incline more to that land of peace, there will be less unkindness amongst those who should ever preach, "Good Will to the whole human family. They will lift their thoughts more from the vexations and troubles of this life, to the city where the saints walk in light, with golden crowns and golden harps, to sing the praises of their Redeemer.

Should not Christians be a holy nation, a peculiar people, courteous in all things? They know the value of these holy charities that take away the dross of selfishness, and should they not be tender in word and deed? Sould they not desire the knowledge of all goodness, and have earnest desire to infuse that knowledge into the hearts ef others? Should not high and pure motives govern them? They are called to a world where no waves of sin or sorrow ever break upon its peaceful shore—no storms disturb the pure serene, and should they not strive to be ready for the great morning that cometh with the angels?

C. F.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

The first number of the third volume of the RELIGIOUS HISTORIAN, will be sent to our subscribers to the second volume, with the request that, if they do not prefer to continue their subseriptions, to return it in the enclosed wrapper.

Our brethren and friends who desire to encourage us in our, at least, well intended labor, will, we trust, see at once, the importance of prompt efforts in receiving and remitting subscriptions. If the matters, we have under examinion, are worthy of Christian consideration, both the church and the world will be benefitted by the work. Could we conclude that the HISTORIAN does not supply, to some extent, at least, a very great want in society, we could not be induced to issue another number. In the prayerful hope, however, that many will be profited, by examining the subjects we have under consideration, we send forth the first number of volume third, in great confidence that, our efforts to promote truth, will not be in vain.

PERSONAL.

We were greatly rejoiced to meet, at the discussion between Dr. Brents and Mr. Ditzler, in Franklin, several of our able and highly esteemed teachers of the word. Amongst them, we were happy to meet once more in the flesh, our distinguished and beloved Brother, Dr. J. T. Barclay, our faithful missionary to the Holy Land. We were, however, pained to witness in our venerable brother, undoubted signs of suffering from the "chilling" influences of his beautiful valley home, in North Alabama. Much remains to be accomplished in the sacred cause, by our brother, and we trust he may be long spared for the service, to which he is evidently called.

Brother G. W. Abell, of Virginia, we met for the first time; and we were much pleased with his gentle and manly bearing as a Christian minister, in whom there can exist no guile. We learned that Bro. Abell, will likely remove to our State, as a laborer in word and doctrine; and while we desire not to deprive the brethren of the "Old Dominion" of his excellent services, we doubt not he will prove a valuable accession to to our corps Evangelic, in Tennessee. We bid him a hearty welcome, and God-speed, in his great labor as a servant of Jesus Christ.

Brother John S. Sweeney, of Paris, Ky., in the very prime of his great powers of body, soul and spirit, was present, ready to perform service in the cause of the Savior. His good spirit, and peculiarly happy manner of presenting the truth, gained him at once, the first place amongst the brethren, and our citizens generally. We fervently pray that, our brother, in the full possession of his great powers, may long be preserved to battle in the cause of the meek and lowly Redeemer.

Brethren D. Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, of the *Gospel Advocate*, well known as efficient teachers, were amongst the attendants, ready and fully equipped, to defend "the faith, once for all, delivered to the saints."

Several quite promising young brethren, took very deep interest in the matters under examination. We were glad to see them.

We wish also, to say, that we were much gratified, to witness the very dignified and Christian bearing of the brothers and sisters in the Lord, while the debate was progressing. "The *how*," of religion, is everything in the church of God.

DISCUSSION BETWEEN DR. T. W. BRENTS AND JACOB DITZLER, D.D.

On the 15th of Dec. 1873, a discussion between Dr. T. W. Brents, Disciple, and Jacob Ditzler, Methodist, was commenced in the town of Franklin, Tenn., and continued four days upon the proposition

IMMERSION IN WATER INTO THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT, WAS THE BAPTISM PRACTICED BY THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST.

From what we heard, we presume, the gentlemen engaged in this discussion, are abont as well posted with reference to the matters of difference between the Disciples and Pedobaptists, as the respective churches of each could have selected. Both are in the prime of their physical and intellectual manhood—about fifty years of age, and each has devoted considerable attention to the teaching of his church. We were gratified at the respectful bearing of the disputants toward each other, and that many of the good citizens took an interest in the discussion. Therefore, as a chronicler of important events in the civilized world, at least, we consider it proper, to give our readers, the main grounds of difference, in the positions assumed as true, with the conclusions of the parties. Dr. Brents engaged to show that *βαπτίζω* the word employed by Christ and the Apostles, signified to immerse. His appeal was, first to the meaning of the word in the Classics, as defined by the dictionaries, and from the *usus loquendi*, of the word, by the Greeks themselves, who best understood the language. Mr. Ditzler, argued, that the word in the Classics, signified to dip, plunge or immerse, but contended that, neither of the significations, denoted baptism—or the burial and resurrection for which we plead.

He also contended, that the word, in the New Testament Greek, "Took on other meanings"—"*diverse* significations" amongst which sprinkle and pour are included.

Dr. Brents showed from Luther, Calvin and Stewart, that while they regarded immerse as the meaning of the word in both classic and New testament usage, the church, for the sake of convenience, has always reserved the right to "*change the forms of the ordinances*," and could do so, without interfering with divine authority. After laboring four days to decide the right, the question was left epen for every one to determtne for himself, wheth-

er a substituted form will answer for the meaning of the *letter*—for the *original* and universally admitted practice.

We respectfully submit the whole question to the judgment and candor of the persons who heard the discussion, as well as to such as may be disposed to look into the matters involved. The subjects examined, seem to us, of sufficient moment to demand the serious attention of Christians.

One day was spent in discussing the question,

"ARE INFANTS PROPER SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM?

Mr. Ditzler engaged to prove that, amongst the "Jews infants were born members"—as he said—"of the church," and that they were—males at least—therefore, entitled to circumcision; and that the infants, of believing parents, are born members of the church under the christian dispensation, and are, therefore, entitled to baptism.

Dr. Brents took the strong ground that, baptism, in no age, has been administered by Sacred aurhority, to members of the church, but alwaye to believers, in order to bring them into the kingdom or church of God.

These were the only points, really discussed, upon the question, and our readers are to determine for themselves, as to which, if either, was in the right.

The subject of remission, remains to be examined, and also the question as to whether the Spirit of God exercises an influence in conversion, without the word of God. We may possibly. in our next, state the grounds of difference, in the examinations of the respective disputants. We, however, suggest, that we are not sure but the arguments employed by each, may find a place in book form, and we therefore, deem it best, to offer, in our monthly, no more of the authority brought to bear by the debatants, than is really necessary for our readers, to see the true issues, between Disciples and the members of, at least, Pedo Baptist denominations.

If there is nothing vital involved, of course, we should pay no attention to such discussions.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

Many human beings are, this year, moving to a country they have always heard of, but have never seen. None who have gone

there, have returned to bring news of it. All are obliged to make the journey, whether they will or not, and they travel on, day and night, without resting. The king who reigns in this far-off country, has laid out a road leading all the way to it. It is strait and narrow, but so plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

There is, too, a book of directions that tells travelers how to live, to eat and to drink, in a word, how to deport themselves, in all respects, so as to please the King. Those who wish to hear him say, "Well done," when they arrive at the gates of his city, take his book and study it all along the way. They do not like to go on without knowing his good pleasure.

The welcome they are to receive in the King's country, will depend upon their obedience to his commands, as they pass along his highway. They have found that, "to obey is better than sacrifice," and when they do his commands, they make their journey in peace and pleasure.

Before the book was given to travelers, the king sent his servants to tell the interest he felt for all. Thinking, however, they would reverence his son, more than others, he sent him to persuade the people to walk in the narrow way that leads to life.

Besides the road laid out by the King's directions, there is a broad and beaten way, where thousands go on thoughtlessly together. Some are wicked and do not care for the King, his son, or the volume given by them. Some object to the directions, others do not listen to them, and think if they do what they consider right, all will be right at last. Many do not study the King's volume, but pray all along the road, that he will himself, tell them what he wishes them to do. This, his son did, just before he went back to his father, but his teaching is not thought sufficient by all, though nothing has since been given.

Some are not satisfied with the road, but try to make roads for themselves, or go as others tell them. Those who professed to travel on the Kings's highway, did so for more than three hundred miles, and there took another road, which many chose after them.

Since that time, roads have been laid out in different direetions, but it is thought all will ultimately unite, and go to the same place.

Many who have great reverence for the King, believe the road he laid out first, is the only safe one. The question is, will all

do ? Are all safe ? Where the word of a King is, there is power. Is it not treating him with disrespect, for travelers to decide that anything short of the King's command is right ?

All the roads lead to a deep river without a bridge. The travelers are obliged to ford it alone. It lies in a dark valley, and is fearful to all. It was terrible even to the King's son, but he passed through its cold waves, and went to prepare, on the other side many mansions for his friends. Now as they cross, they often have glimpses of beauty that cause them to exclaim, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death—though I pass through deep waters, I will fear no evil." Sometimes, in the midst of the river, they look back and talk to their friends, telling them of a city, on before, built with pearls and precious stones. They pass over, reach its beautiful gates and are invited to enter the joy of their Lord. An old writer says, "When the gates were opened, I looked in, and behold, the city shone like the sun. The streets were paved with gold, and many with golden crowns and golden harps were walking therein. They sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord." When the gates were shut I wished myself among them."

"HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE."

Every day with Wesley, began at 4 o'clock, at the latest. There were very few days, if a congregation could be assembled, that he did not preach a sermon at 5 in the morning. Often, he preached three times a day, throughout the week, besides attending to classes and to difficult business. He spent much time in prayer and counsel with persons who wanted help and direction. For half a century he continued his course, unflagging in zeal and unchecked by the infirmities of age, with full control of his mental faculties. Everywhere, his unresting labors of love were felt. His fellow-preachers dropped off one by one, his old friends died, but his life was prolonged. In the wildest parts of the country, where it could be said, "No one cared for our souls," there was John Wesley, preaching to thousands and tens of thousands.

On the wild moors of Cornwall, was a natural excavation. The walls were between 700 and 800 feet high. Thirty thousand persons often met there to welcome the old man who had first brought them the news that "Christ had died for them." Miners and fisher-

men, who had put lights on the cliffs, during night storms, that vessels might be wrecked against them, were here "clothed and in their right minds," ready to greet and gladden their father in Christ. They sang the hymns he composed and set to music. Thousands bursting into song, had wonderful effect. Some of his hymns became like national airs. In the chambers of death—in the joyful meetings of households—in other lands, soldiers, slaves and prisoners have told of the joy with which they filled their lives.

John Wesley and his preachers had not only devoted friends, but also bitter persecution. They were pelted with bricks, stones, rotten eggs and anything that could be found at the moment. Blood hounds were set upon them, but they escaped out of the hands of the wicked when they could, and went to other places to tell of Jerus and his love.

Charles Wesley was preaching in the street when one of his hearers proposed ducking him. He let them lead him wherever they would, and with one of his friends, commenced singing. The mob was so much affected by his calmness and fortitude, they released him. He took his stand, and addressed an imnense multitude, first giving out the hymn,

"Angel of God, whate'er betide,
Thy summons I obey.
Jesus, I take Thee for my guide,
And walk in Thee, my Way."

John Wesley lived to see thousands collect to look on him as he passed. Cavalcades were formed to meet and escort him. No man could have been more loved and honored, but he was always plain and simple. The man who did not shrink from persecution could bear honor without being injured. He says, "I exhort all who wish me to watch over their souls, to wear no gold, no pearls or precious stones—to use no curling of hair, or costly apparel. Be serious, was one of his favorite injunctions. Avoid lightness as you would hell-fire. He preached till his 88th year. Toward the last, he was held up by two persons while he spoke. As full of honors as of years, revered by thousands and tens of thousands, the noble old man lay down to die. He was several days dying. "Now, he says, we have done, let us go." Eleven persons were standing around him as he gave his last farewell. "Children, said John Wesley's mother, as soon as I am dead, sing a song of praise." As soon as he died, his friends sang a song of triumph, and then knelt in prayer around him. He was laid out, and multitudes crowded to see him for the last time. So great was the excitement caused by his death, he was buried at 5 o'clock in the morning.

He died March 7th, 1791. His biographer says, "No purer, more upright, single-minded spirit can be found in the annals of modern times. Honor to him for what he did—for the faith and energy that marked his character." The young should know what a man can do, when his heart is full of love to Christ, and of earnest desire for the salvation of his fellow-beings.